United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council condemns all violent acts committed on political and ethnic grounds, intimidation and attack on UNTAC personnel; warns that it will "respond appropriately" should any of the parties fail to comply with results of election; Secretary-General's Special Representative says election will be "one of freest and fairest elections in region".

+ Secretary-General proposes budget of $31.2 million for international war crimes tribunal to prosecute those responsible for violations of humanitarian law in former Yugoslavia.

+ Contribution of Ukrainian and Belorussian troops to peace-keeping operations in former Yugoslavia discussed by two Co-Chairmen of Yugoslav Conference in Minsk and Kiev; Thorvald Stoltenberg to visit UNPROFOR's Headquarters in Zagreb next week.

+ Recent violent incidents in occupied territories deplored by Secretary-General; appeals for restraint and more international economic assistance.

+ United Nations, for first time, demarcates boundary between two States for international peace and security, Secretary-General tells Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission; calls on Iraq to respect results; WFP says food supply situation in northern Iraq is critical.

+ Uganda says it has no objections to deployment of United Nations observers on its side of border with Rwanda to monitor conflict between the Rwandese Government and the Rwandese Patriotic Front.

+ No consensus reached on theme for Fiftieth Anniversary of United Nations, as planning committee continues discussions.

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Expressing its strong support for the almost five million Cambodians who have registered to vote in the election beginning Sunday, the Security Council

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today deplored all acts of non-cooperation with the 1990 Paris Agreements and condemned all violent acts committed on political and ethnic grounds, intimidation and attack on UNTAC personnel. The Council, reminding the Cambodian parties of their obligation under the Agreements fully to comply with the results of the election, warned that it would "respond appropriately" should any of the parties fail to honour its obligations.

The Council took that action by adopting unanimously resolution 826 (1993) under which it expressed its full support for the measures taken by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) to protect the safety of UNTAC personnel and underlined the need for UNTAC to continue those efforts. It demanded that all parties take all actions necessary to safeguard to lives and the security of UNTAC personnel throughout Cambodia and desist from any threats or intimidation.

The Council reaffirmed its readiness to support fully the constituent assembly; the process of drawing up a constitution and establishing a new government for all Cambodia; and to support subsequent efforts to promote national reconciliation and peace-building.

Meanwhile, Yasushi Akashi, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia said today that the political campaign for the Cambodian election from 23 to 28 May had been a "great success". The election would be "one of the freest and fairest elections the region has seen", he said. More than 1,500 meetings and rallies had been held -- attended by a total of 800,000 people -- without a single major violent incident. Cambodians knew and understood that the vote would be secret, he told today's working session of Cambodia's Supreme National Council (SNC).

The election might not meet the highest standards of the more mature democracies in every respect, but those countries themselves did not always meet those standards, Mr. Akashi said. However, the technical conduct of the election would be of the highest standard, thanks to the Electoral Component of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), and the presence of party agents, international observers and the media.

Cambodians would vote "in their millions", and UNTAC had taken stringent measures for the safety and security of the election, the Special Representative stressed. UNTAC's mandate was restricted to self-defense, but UNTAC troops did not hesitate to return fire if attacked. "We shall be equally vigorous in defense of the Cambodian elections", he said.

A United Nations spokesman told correspondents that UNTAC was making a major effort to go where the voters were, and that there would be voting in all 21 Provinces, and in all but one district. No registered voter would have to travel more than 15 kilometers to reach a polling site, he said.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has proposed a budget of $31.2 million for the international war crimes tribunal to be set up to prosecute those responsible for the violations of humanitarian law in former Yugoslavia.

That would cover staff of 373, plus 11 judges and related operating cost, according to an addendum to his report of 3 May containing recommendations on the establishment of the tribunal. Not included in the budget were the possible rental of premises, detention facilities before and during the trial, imprisonment and other costs which might arise in the course of establishing the tribunal, the addendum said.

The tribunal proposed by the Secretary-General would be created on the basis of a Security Council resolution under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which concerns "action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression". The tribunal would deal with grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, violations of the laws and customs of war, genocide and crimes against humanity and would thus cover "ethnic cl ansing" and rape.

The Secretary-General was invited by Security Council resolution 808 of 22 February, 1993, to put forward his proposals for the "effective and expeditious" creation of a war crimes tribunal.

A five-member Expert Commission set up by the Council has been working since last October to examine and analyze information received from Member States on grave breaches of the Geneva Convention.

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The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia, Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg, today held meetings in Belarus and Ukraine to discuss possible troop contributions to United Nations forces in the former Yugoslavia. The talks followed discussions yesterday in Naples between the Co-Chairmen and senior officers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), during which the importance of a balanced force, including more Eastern European troops, was stressed.

In a press release issued today at Headquarters, the Spokesman for the Co-Chairmen said that in the Belarus capital of Minsk, the country's political leaders reacted favourably to the proposal to contribute Belarussian civilians to a United Nations Mission to monitor the border of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The subject of sending Belarus troops abroad - currently prohibited under the national legislation - would be raised immediately in the Parliament in order to allow Belarussian soldiers to participate in the peace-keeping operations in Bosnia, he said.

In Kiev, the Co-Chairmen expressed their gratitude to the Ukrainian political leaders for their country's current participation in the United Nations Protection Force in Bosnia. President Kravchuk also informed the Co-Chairmen that Ukraine was considering contributing a second battalion to the United Nations force in the former Yugoslavia.

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Following today's meetings, Lord Owen was scheduled to return to London, while Mr. Stoltenberg was to travel to Oslo. Early next week, the latter plans to go to the Headquarters of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Zagreb, in connection with his new responsibilities as Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today deplored the "substantial increase" in violent incidents during recent weeks in which a number of Palestinians and Israelis were killed and wounded in the occupied territories. He appealed to all sides for restraint and to avoid steps that would aggravate the situation, according to a statement issued at Headquarters.

At the same time, the Secretary-General was concerned at the sharp deterioration of the economic situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, resulting from the Israeli decision at the end of March 1993 to close off the territories. He appealed to the international community for greater economic assistance to the occupied territories and reminded the major donors of the critical financial situation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

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The United Nations has for the first time in history demarcated the boundary between two Member States in the context of maintaining international peace and security, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said today in a statement to the final session of the the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission. Law, technology, diplomacy and security had come together in a unique United Nations endeavour, he told the Commission.

The Secretary-General called on the Government of Iraq to respect the Commission's decisions concerning the demarcation, stressing that they were final. He expressed regret that the Iraqi representative, who had participated in the land demarcation, did not attend meetings related to the demarcation of the off-shore boundary.

The Secretary-General said he was helping the parties to settle some practical problems resulting from the demarcation, and those steps would contribute to stabilizing the security situation in the area. He went on to say that he would bring the Commission's report to the attention of the Security Council, noting that the Council, in resolution 687 (1991), had guaranteed the inviolability of the boundary.

In a press communiqué issued earlier today, the Commission said the physical representation of the boundry between Iraq and Kuwait had been completed, with 106 pillars and 28 intermediate markers demarcating the land boundry, and coordinates demarcating the low-water line between the two countries.

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The Commission also noted that it had not reallocated territory between Kuwait and Iraq, but had carried out the technical task necessary to demarcate, for the first time, the coordinates of the boundry reaffirmed in the 1963 Agreed Minutes signed by both countries.

In a separate development, the World Food Programme (WFP) today warned that emergency food aid for northern Iraq would run out in 10 days, putting at risk more than one million people. The food supply situation in the country as a whole was critical, with almost two million people needing assistance, warned the WFP.

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Uganda has said that it had no objections to the deployment of United Nations observers on its side of the border with Rwanda to monitor the the conflict between the Rwandese Government and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF). Furthermore, Uganda would not insist on the simultaneous deployment of United Nations peace-keepers inside Rwanda and the stationing of observers on its side of the common border, the Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations, Perezi K. Kamunanwire, said in a letter to the Security Council, dated 18 May.

The Council, in resolution 812 of 12 March 1993, had asked the Secretary-General to examine a request for the deployment of United Nations observers along the border between Rwanda and Uganda, in consultations with the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It had also asked him to consider the establishment of an international force, under the aegis of the United Nations and the OAU, to protect the civilian population.

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The Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations today failed to achieve consensus on a theme for the celebration. However, there is agreement among Committee members that the question must be urgently resolved.

The Committee has had two proposals under consideration in ongoing informal consultations: the original theme proposed by the Secretary-General of "We the Peoples"; and an expanded version of that proposal, "We the peoples for peace, justice, equality and development".

The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Information and Public Policy, Ms. Gillian Sorensen, addressing the Committee for the first time since her appointment, said that celebrating the anniversary would be an opportunity to create an activity that was truly global in scope.

The Committee will meet next on 8 June.

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Correction:

In Wednesday Highlights, 19 May, 1993, the second sentence of the headline on Cambodian situation should have read:

"Number of polling sites cut in half in Kompong Thom Province, from 102 to 51, because of security risks".

(There are currently 1561 polling stations in Cambodia, according to estimates. The original number was 1800, according to a United Nations spokesman today.)

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